

Iran Continues to Pursue Nuclear Weapons in Advance of Election

June 10, 2009

This week, we are experiencing Iran's presidential election. While the election is noteworthy, it will probably not have an impact on Iran's illegal nuclear program. Unlike in the United States, the President of Iran has minimal influence over the country's national security policies. Those decisions are controlled by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the unelected head of Iran's theocratic regime.

The supreme leader has vowed to continue Iran's nuclear program, and unfortunately we see evidence of this. Just last Friday, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran has sped up production of nuclear fuel and installed more centrifuges in advance of the election. Nuclear weapons experts say Iran now has enough centrifuge capacity to fuel up to two nuclear weapons a year.

Iran is determined to acquire nuclear weapons regardless of who is president. It would be a mistake for the Obama administration and this Congress to wait and see what direction Iran takes if a new president is elected because the course appears to be already determined. If we are going to engage Iran, we must do so right away-immediately-and back engagement with tougher actions.